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ABSTRACT

This paper by a public school teacher and elected official with 32 years' experience in public education discusses the placement of minority students and service delivery to minorities in special education programs in public school systems. The paper argues that various school practices often cause a disproportionate placement of minorities in special education programs and that a number of societal factors make the problems of at-risk minority students even more difficult and unpredictable. In addition, the demographic revolution of the past decade has brought about a degree of linguistic and cultural diversity that profoundly influences the country's social institutions. Schools are ill-equipped to deal with language minority students because of inadequate teacher training or inappropriate curricula, and, as a consequence, those students are placed in a special education programming track, as are many minority youngsters at-risk for other reasons, such as low self-esteem, peer pressure, inappropriate curricula, negative home environment, and, in some cases, a hostile school climate. It is proposed, however, that general education programs properly adapted can serve a large number of students currently placed in special education programs. Recommendations are made to prevent the overrepresentation of minorities in special programs and to improve the placement process of children with special needs, and systems to assure adequate service delivery for this population are presented. A reaction paper by Tennyson J. Wright adds to these recommendations, noting that educators need to be educated about the real America of minority populations; that Americans need to develop an appreciation of differences as human and natural; and that a liberal education of inclusion relative to racial, cultural, gender, disability, class, and language differences needs to be developed. A second reaction paper, by Julian Castillo, points out that an understanding of the sub-groups encompassed in the term Hispanic is needed, that programs need to address the issue of accountability, and that effective preschool programs and individual service planning are needed for minority group students. (Contains 12 references.) (JDD)

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Educational Needs of Minorities with Disabilities
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[and]

Reaction to Educational Needs of Minorities with Disabilities
Tennyson J. Wright

Reaction to Educational Needs of Minorities with Disabilities
Dr. Julian Castillo

EC 303154

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Educational Needs Of Minorities with Disabilities

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to stimulate discussion around the placement of minorities and the service delivery to minorities in special education programs in public school systems. It is hoped that the discussion will lead to a framework for policy development in this area. The writer will use relevant research data and a background of thirty-two years of experience in public service and public education, to place this issue into a policy framework.

My experiences as a student in both the parochial and public school systems and as a public school teacher have given me a negative perspective of public education. In addition, my experiences as a public official, elected and appointed, have extended this perspective, especially as it applies to education programs for minority youth.

The following observations are of primary concern to me regarding the impact of education on minority children and youth:

* There are school practices that have had negative effect on student achievement, particularly on that of minority students. These practices often cause:

* The disproportionate placement of minorities in special education programs, and

* Minorities remaining in special education programs longer than non-minorities.

In addition, there are societal factors that impact on the school's ability to teach and the student's ability to learn. Schools are generally geared to deal with the student whose behavioral difficulties are mental. However, students were learning problems which can be traced to environmental factors, i.e. malnutrition, mothers addicted to alcohol and drugs. There is a greater unpredictability about these at-risk children as a consequence of the turmoil in their lives when compared to students whose impairments may be attributable to other causes.

It is within this context that the issues of educating minorities with and without disabilities will be considered. Moreover, there are a number of educational initiatives at a national level that speak to the problems existing with the entire education system in the United States. It is my feeling that we cannot address one part without looking at the whole system.

The National Council on Disability, an independent federal agency, charged with reviewing all laws, programs, and policies of the federal government affecting individuals, recently issued a study: The Education of Students with Disabilities: Where Do We Stand? (1989). The study cites a number of number of findings and makes specific recommendations for educational policy makers. The Council's studies are timely because education is at the top of the federal administration's policy agenda.

The President of the United States is so concerned about education that he recently convened all the governors of the states in an "Educational Summit" to draw up a blueprint for the reform of the country's educational system. The outcome of the Summit was the America 2000 Program, which speaks to the restructuring of the educational programs in the U.S.

In concert with the President's education initiative, the business community has come to recognize the need for an educated and skilled work force to maintain America's economic position in a global marketplace. The business community has joined the President to assist the administration in redesigning our educational system.

When we consider the President's and the governors' priority for education reform referred to as America 2000, the business community's call for improved education programs, and The National Council on Disability's study, it is evident that education is not working. **It needs to be fixed.** It is my opinion that we cannot serve disabled students, **minority or non-minority** adequately, without serving the total population. In other words, we need a new education model for all students based on the President's premise that **ALL CHILDREN CAN LEARN AND WE HAVE THE RESOURCES TO TEACH THEM.**

The paper will present some data about the overrepresentation of minorities in special programs and some recommendations to prevent their placement in these programs. In addition, recommendations are made that should improve the placement process of children with special needs. Finally, systems to assure adequate service delivery for this population will be presented.

Review of the Literature

One question often asked, is what is it about school practices that affects the school's ability to teach and the student's ability to learn? This is a complex question with no easy answers. Over the past decade, society has experienced a demographic revolution. Our society has become increasingly diverse as a result of the

immigration of Hispanic and Asian peoples. Language and cultural diversity are having a profound impact on the country's social institutions. In addition to this social phenomenon, we have experienced a major alteration in the households headed by males, females, and teens. There is also the complexity and pressure of living today. We have more households today with both parents working than ever before. We also struggle with the plight of the homeless. What does this demographic revolution mean to schools?

The school has become the focal point of the demographic revolution as it applies to our students' growth and the delivery of educational supportive services. The National Commission on Excellence Report, A Nation at Risk (1983), brought two concepts into the forefront of education: the interdependence of an achieving nation and achieving students; and the idea of being "at risk" - a term now used to describe children whose potential is undermined by health, social, educational and/or economic factors. This complex condition presents us with an education environment that is fraught with complicated dilemmas. One of these is the disproportionate placement of minorities in special education programs, which is the thesis of this paper.

The Placement of Minority Students in Special Education Programs

Several observations regarding this issue were reported at a conference sponsored by the National Alliance of Black School Educators as part of the Charles D. Moody Research Institute's policy forum held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1989.

Don Clark, administrator at the Pennsylvania Department of Education, presented a paper to the National Alliance of Black School Educators (1989) in which he stated that if in the classifications used by the American Association on Mental Deficiency, you could not find any reason to classify any child under the seven definitions listed in their manual due to psychological reasons, you could find an eighth classification based on the functional history, the low income, and low family academic functions. This eighth category could be used to classify the child as educable mentally retarded. He also stated that with the passage of Public Law 94-142, ten million children were identified as educable mentally retarded. 7.5 million were identified as educable mentally retarded and of that population 43 percent were African American.

Ruth Love, former Superintendent of Schools in Chicago and Oakland, stated that 85 percent of the students in the special education programs in Chicago were African American. This situation brought her to the conclusion that one of the goals of the special education program must be to get kids back into the mainstream.

The Assistant Secretary of the Civil Rights Division (1990) focused his objectives for the department on the area of ability grouping, the treatment of children whose native language is other than English, and the disproportionate placement of minority children in special education classes. In September 1987, the New York State Education Commissioner appointed a Task Force on the Education of

Children and Youth At-Risk (1988). The charge to the task force was to recommend to the Commissioner and the Board of Regents a comprehensive, long-term strategy for improving the education of at-risk children and youth. One of the task force recommendations was to revise practices as necessary, of special education programs to ensure accurate referral, assessment and placement of at-risk children, and to avoid stigmatizing students.

The Education of Students with Disabilities: Where Do We Stand? (1989), cited a number of findings along with specific recommendations for educational policy makers.

Finding #3: Parents and students report that some schools have low expectations for students with disabilities and establish inappropriate learning objectives and goals.

Finding #4: Services often are not available to meet the needs of disadvantaged, minority, and rural families who have children with disabilities.

Finding #18: Special education is a relatively separate system of service delivery.

Finding #20: Current pedagogy regarding effective schools and teaching practices can facilitate the integration of special needs students into general classrooms.

As a direct result of the findings of the study, the National Council raised questions regarding the relationship between educational settings and student outcomes, the feasibility of enhanced Federal-state partnerships, and the consolidation and improvements of special education and general education for all students.

The National Council considered the findings so important that it commissioned another national study: Serving the Nation's Students with Disabilities: Progress and Prospects. This study attempted to address questions unanswered in the first report including:

* Where do students with disabilities fit into current education reforms, such as America 2000 and the fall 1991 Report Card on the Status of Education in America (1991)?

* Do students with disabilities receive equitable treatment in education assessment and research programs?

* Are traditionally neglected and underrepresented students shuttled away from their non-disabled peers and placed in programs that do not fit their needs?

* How can special education and general education systems work together, across federal and state and local levels, to ensure that students with disabilites will achieve valued outcomes?

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975) did little to acknowledge the unique needs of Hispanic or language minority children in special education, (Figueroa, 1989). He suggests that Public Law 94-142 was silent on Hispanic pupils (15% of the population at the time). The evidence suggested that misplacements in special education programs were not benign, and the miseducation of bilingual children may well have been the norm. Irrespective of bilingual education, controversy surrounds different methodologies for the delivery of bilingual education. Linda Chavez, a former White House aide, recently published a book entitled Out of the Barrio: The Assimilation of Hispanics into the Mainstream. She states that a survey of Mexican-American parents indicates that Hispanic parents want the school to concentrate on teaching reading and writing in English to their children. This is a change from the traditional bilingual education programs that are currently available in public schools. She feels that the dual system is supported by the bilingual educators to maintain their jobs.

So what does all of this mean? In this writer's opinion, it points to an education system that is on overload, confused and bogged down. It is apparent that there are a number of conditions that put students at risk. Poverty, the impact of racism, cultural differences, and the weakening of the home influence are many contributing societal factors. Moreover, low self-esteem, peer pressure, lack of self-discipline and life goals coupled with the school factors of inappropriate curricula, inadequate school services, and, in some instances, a hostile school climate often lead to students' failure in school.

As mentioned earlier, the profile of the student in question does not fit the student with a disability syndrome. Rather, the student of concern fits into the category of a social syndrome that impacts on his ability to learn. At the same time, the school is ill-equipped to deal with this youngster because of inadequate teacher training or inappropriate curricula, and, as a consequence, places that student into a special education programming track.

Every day the gap is widening between the program options available to students in affluent/stable communities and children who attend schools in less affluent communities. All too often, at-risk children find themselves in failing schools which have the least resources, physical plants in deteriorating conditions and the most dispirited and least inspired teachers. Teachers often find themselves ill - trained and overwhelmed as they attempt to work with as many youngsters as possible. Many students fall between the cracks or are misplaced and too often written off. It is within this educational climate that referrals to special education programs occur, often with good educational intent, but more often than not, for the wrong reasons.

After working for thirty-two years in public education, I have come to the

conclusion that we need to refocus our educational priorities and concentrate on the restructuring of our educational system. The next section of the paper will attempt to spell out what is wrong and what can be done about it.

Personal Observations

My experiences as an educator and public official in the educational and public service fields have enabled me to draw a number of conclusions about educational programs, both regular and special. My first premise is we should keep students out of special education programs whenever and wherever possible. Once students enter the system it is very difficult to get them out. Secondly, I feel that general education programs properly adapted can serve a large number of students presently placed in special education programs.

Gardner and Lipsky (1989) present an excellent summation of the positions to merge educational services into a unitary system. It is their position that attitudes and assumptions about the disabled and disabilities require change as do the inadequacies in general and special education practices. They call for a unitary education system - "an educational model for all students that is supple, variegated, and individualized- in an integrated setting".

Students enter school (kindergarten level) ready to learn and eager to get involved in the school program. Observe any kindergarten class and you will see kids having fun. They are talking, working with materials, experimenting and interacting with each other and their school environment. When the kids enter the first grade something happens. Sometimes school isn't fun anymore. We educators begin the regimentation process. We put students into tidy rows. We limit their movement around the room. We discourage students from talking to each other. We make them raise their hands to ask questions. The fun and spontaneity of learning is gone. I maintain this structure is designed to control behavior of students and impedes the learning process.

When I was a principal of a special education facility with a program design of an open classroom/education methodology, there were certain elements about the program that shaped my attitudes and beliefs about education in general. Dr. Stephen Glenn, a noted family life expert offered a theory as to why youth are at risk today (1989). He feels that our schools are in trouble primarily because the world around us has changed and schools have not changed. Today's schools were originally designed to meet the needs of an agrarian economy and then adapted somewhat to address the needs of an industrial economy. Our schools are just not well suited to meet today's business needs or the needs of a diverse student population.

He looks back in time at the one-room school house and the good teaching practices that occurred in that environment. Older students often served as tutors and mentors for younger students. There was more sharing and collaboration and less competitiveness in that teaching and learning situation. Children felt their time,

effort, and work were validated. They felt affirmed. They gained self esteem and self-worth.

KIDS FELT GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES.

In the open classroom approach, an environment was designed absent of classroom walls. Learning space was conducive to kids interacting with other kids and staff. Teachers could easily talk to other teachers and staff members. Both teachers and students could easily access learning materials. The students thrived in this environment. Older youngsters helped younger students in a family type setting. There was an absence of tension. Self-esteem was enhanced and as a consequence achievement went up. I feel that the traditional school environment restricts free movement of students and may be an impediment to the learning process.

One common practice used in schools is ability grouping. In my opinion, grouping students by ability hurts more than it helps a student. A fellow friend and educator, Carl Boyd conducts education seminars around the country using the theme: NOBODY RISES TO LOW EXPECTATIONS. Grouping students by ability, particularly for those students in the lower groups, sends a message of low expectations. "Sixty Years of Research Finds Grouping Students by Ability Doesn't Increase Achievement" was the conclusion drawn from the research of Dr. Robert E. Slavin of Johns Hopkins University (1989).

Why do we group students by ability? One could argue that it is done for the benefit of the teacher. Teachers feel that it is an effective teaching method. Tracking/ability grouping began in the early 1900's as a means of dealing with immigrant students to maintain social control. Still today we find that the majority of students tracked into vocational and non-academic courses and grouped in lower achieving sections are minorities - primarily African American and Hispanic students.

The negative school practices cited above damage a student's self--esteem. Without self-worth it is almost impossible to succeed. Low self-esteem is an addiction, a state that seems to underlie afflictions as diverse as bulimia and performance anxiety. "People see that self-esteem is a component of so many other things - teenage pregnancies, dropouts, drugs and school success", states an article in the magazine Newsweek (1992). Let's talk self-esteem to a positive dimension. Eugene Lang, a noted philanthropist, sponsored a sixth grade elementary class from East Harlem, New York City Elementary school. He guaranteed college tuition of the students if they completed high school. The sixth grade prior to Mr. Lang's sponsored grade had a 25% high school completion rate. Mr. Lang's class had a 75% high school completion rate. Research of the classes revealed that Mr. Lang gave students hope and a new vision. Affluent kids have hope and feel they have the power to control their destiny. Less affluent kids, by contrast, feel powerless to control their destiny. They feel their future is controlled by fate. Mr. Lang's program changed their outlook. He gave them hope.

NOBODY RISES TO LOW EXPECTATIONS - says Carl Boyd. It is apparent

that certain school practices are affecting minority students' achievement and are a direct cause of referrals to special education programs. The challenge to all of us is what can be done about it.

Recommendations

We Need A New Model.

What America expects of its public schools these days is nothing less than miraculous. Never mind that the children who show up for their first year of school may have lived their early childhood in chaos. The Unfinished Agenda, a study released by The Committee for Economic Development (1991), takes the position that a child's education begins at birth. If the child is deprived of physical and emotional nourishment and intellectual stimulation, the child's teachers will have to play catch-up. That teachers often lose the game is all too clear. The report proposes expanding the Head Start preschool program to enroll every eligible child; it also endorses easier, broader access to prenatal care and childhood immunization and calls for a collaborative effort from all sectors of society.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching recently published a report - **Ready To Learn: A Mandate For The Nation** (1991) in response to President Bush's goal that all children should enter school ready to learn (America 2000). The report lays out an extensive plan showing how we can, as a country, get our students READY TO LEARN. Therefore, my first and foremost recommendation is to focus on preschool programs, particularly in less affluent areas of the country.

My next recommendation deals with restructuring the schools and, in particular, eliminating perceived negative school practices. We need to go back and take a page out of the successful methodologies used in the one-room school house. A number of schools are experimenting with what is called collaborative work cultures/cooperative learning. Cooperative learning is the practice of students working together to solve a problem or work on a project. The emphasis is on cooperation rather than competition. We do not need to segregate large numbers of students into separate classes. We need to find more ways to mainstream our diverse student population. Collaborative work cultures/cooperative learning is one way of achieving this goal.

My final recommendation addresses the referral and placement process of students. It has been well documented that minority students are disproportionately placed into special education classes. To alleviate this practice we need a system that holds staff members accountable and responsible. We need to look at Individual Service Planning for all students. We need a comprehensive system that puts forth strategies for services based on the theory that students have different needs which require different services. The school must be able to develop and modify plans according to the student's needs. Since different kinds of students have different needs which require different services, schools should provide a variety of services and recommend students to various programs according to current needs. I think

one answer to this dilemma is **Individual Service Planning. We need to develop funding to make this work**

In Summary

The education system is broken. It needs to be fixed.We cannot meet the unique educational needs of minorities without meeting the needs of the total school population. I recommend focusing on Readiness to Learn programs, changing negative school practices that impact on a student's interests and ability to learn, and, last but not least, holding the staff accountable and responsible for a student's progress through Individual Service Planning.

A former boss of mine said it this way: "When we all arrive on this earth. we are expected to paint pretty pictures. However, when we open up our paint boxes, some of us find that all of the colors are not there, or they may be chipped and diluted and the paint brushes are either broken or missing". In this context we need to help all kids paint the pictures they are capable of by providing them with the necessary equipment and resources **so that each one can become all that he/she can be.**

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Reaction to Educational Needs of Minorities with Disabilities

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I want to thank the National Council on Disability for the opportunity to present today and to respond to Dr. Bedell's thought provoking paper. Dr. Bedell has provided a very insightful articulation of the unique educational needs of minorities with disabilities. His vast experience as an educator, administrator, and consultant has provided him with a keen insight into the problems and challenges which face minorities with disabilities in the educational system. Among the issues which he has addressed, and with which I agree, are:

- School practices have a negative effect on student achievement, particularly minority students.
- There is a disproportionate placement of minority students into special education.
- Minorities remain in special education programs longer than non-minorities.

He has identified several environmental factors which contribute to the disabilities which affect these students. Among them are:

- Malnutrition
- Mothers addicted to drugs
- Poor prenatal care

I might also add that among other factors are:

- Racism
- Sexism
- Little or no health insurance for the millions of minorities in America (in fact, Hispanics are the largest population in America today without

health insurance, followed by African Americans -- the smallest number are white Americans.)

- Alcoholism and drug addiction of minorities, and
- Exposure to dangerous health conditions in the workplace.

Dr. Bedell has also addressed the findings of *America 2000 Program* which emerged from the Bush administration and the National Council on Disability's findings and recommendations in *The Education of Students with Disabilities: Where Do We Stand.* These two studies identified specific recommendations for education policy makers and reformers of the country's educational system.

In addition, we must not forget the challenges to education that grew out of *Workforce 2000, Opportunity 2000,* and *The Bottom Line: Basic Skills in the Workplace* which were commissioned by the Department of Labor and published by the Hudson Institute. These documents challenged government, education, labor, and the general public to prepare today's youth, including persons with disabilities, to prepare for the changing education and skill needs and demands of the year 2000.

Now, let's turn to the thesis of Dr. Bedell's presentation: *The Placement of Minority Students in Special Education Programs.* As he has noted, far too many minority children in the public education system are labeled as mentally retarded, hyperactive, slow learners, developmentally delayed, problem children, etc. He has noted that the system continues to label these children who come from the poorest families in America and condemn them to a lifetime of imprisonment as "mentally retarded" -- a sentence from which few escape and even fewer educators and government officials care to do anything about.

What he did not say directly, but alluded to, is that this educational system "blames the victim" of the labeling for being:

- Poor
- Victims of racism and prejudice
- Disabled
- Members of minority, racial, and ethnic groups
- Uneducated or undereducated
- Institutionalized victims
- Devalued as human beings
- From the other side of the tracks
- Underemployed or unemployed

The system of education fostered in America today supports a program which can be viewed as one which is a "Deficit Model" -- identifying and focusing on what minorities do not have and as measured against a "white European standard of able bodied persons." Such a system utilizes assessment methodologies, teaching methodologies, pedagogical techniques, and achievement standards which are racial

and ethnic, gender and class biased. For example, standardized test instruments were developed by white Europeans based upon white European norms and applied to individuals who are not represented in the norms. From a purely psychometric perspective, such test instruments are by definition not valid nor reliable instruments for use with minorities and particularly minorities with disabilities. Yet, the results are treated as if they were valid and reliable measures of intellectual functioning and the student is too often labeled as "deficient," "retarded," "developmentally delayed," "learning disabled," etc. The problem does not lie with the student but with the test developer, corporate manufacturer and producer, educational system, government, and practitioners who are too ignorant to know the difference between a "bad test" and an individual who is different from the population norm. This is a true example of neglect, abuse, and professional malpractice. Until Americans, like you and me, say "enough is enough," the abuses will continue.

Dr. Bedell has reviewed the literature and presented an excellent, though brief, overview of education in America. He has noted that the self-esteem prevalent in the one room school is absent in American education today. He has recommended that the education system return to the philosophy and methodologies of yesteryear when education and learning were fun and exciting for the educator and the student. He has also recommended a new model of individual service planning.

Let me add to those recommendations: We need to educate the educator, the psychometrician, the test developer, the school administrator, and others about the real America of populations of Asian Americans, African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic Americans with disabilities.

- We must overhaul the education system by developing a liberal education of inclusion and not exclusion relative to the values and difference inherent in

  - Race
  - Culture
  - Gender
  - Disability
  - Class
  - Language

- We must educate Americans about the growing division of this country into two classes -- separate and unequal and prevent its continuation.

- We must install values in Americans which appreciate differences as not good vs. bad but rather human and natural.

- We must educate Americans about the ability and not the disability.

- We must recruit, educate, and employ more minorities and minorities with disabilities.

- We must educate Americans about the Americans with Disability Act as a civil rights act which protects the educational rights of children with disabilities.

You and I are responsible for today's condition and we must take responsibility for changing the way in which minority children with disabilities in the educational system are abused and neglected. We can change today or pay the price tomorrow and for generations to come. Again, I wish to commend Dr. Bedell for his excellent paper.

Thank you.

Reaction to Educational Needs of Minorities with Disabilities

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Muchisimas gracias, es un gran placer en estar aqui con ustedes para compartir en esta conferencia. Thank you very much, it is a pleasure for me to have been invited to participate in this conference. My role today is to react to Dr. Bedell's paper. He stated that "' there are societal factors that impact on the school's ability to teach and the student's ability to learn". Dr. Bedell goes on to say that the educational system should be considered as a whole and not separated in addressing the issues of educating minorities with and without disabilities. I am in full agreement with Dr. Bedell on this point. The educational system must provide for access to the full array of educational opportunities consistent with the student's intellectual abilities.

Dr. Bedell points out that "our society has become increasingly diverse . . . . The language and cultural diversity are having a profound impact on the country's social institutions". It is important that we have a good understanding of the various minority groups we are attempting to serve in order that informed decisions result in public policy that is culturally sensitive and effective. The planning process for delivery of services requires an understanding and knowledge of the population to be served. This contention is supported in a report by Development Associates, Inc. "Historical trends and projections in the size, composition, and geographic distribution are among the characteristics of the Hispanic population that are needed to determine what type of services are required and where these services should be located. Without this information, it is extremely difficult to assess the adequacy of present programs or to plan for the future needs of Hispanics". The Hispanic populations consist of a number of sub--groups with different origins. This diversity contributes to distinctive cultural characteristics, thus requires an understanding of the sub-groups encompassed in the term Hispanic. As the saying goes, IF YOU DO NOT KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING, HOW CAN YOU TELL THAT YOU HAVE GOTTEN THERE.

Dr. Bedell states that poverty, racism experiences, and cultural differences places students at risk. Dropout rates must be added to these factors. It is evident from the data just presented that Hispanic youths are definitely at risk. Dr. Bedell

also indicates that we have "an education system that is on overload, confused and bogged down"". There is a need for change which includes a process that will provide for accountability. The University of Texas Pan American is presently involved in establishing the Center for Professional Development and Technology. The Center will implement a program to prepare teachers and provide continuing education in order to meet the needs of the students being served. The University is located in an area where the population is 70 to 85% Hispanic. Maybe this project can provide a model program that will address the concerns expressed by Dr. Bedell including inappropriate curricula, inadequate school services, and a hostile environment. According to Dr. Kevin Morse, a Center faculty member, the Center is tied to the current trend of accountability in state government. Dr. Morse states that "accountability is the big thing . . . . . The way you make a difference is by proving that when you teach, somebody learns. We're going to look at insisting that student[s] [teachers] give us evidence that they've taught somebody something before they get certified to teach". This project attempts to address the issue of accountability.

Dr. Bedell believes that "grouping students by ability hurts more than it helps a student". The concept of grouping is a concern, but not a great concern to me. However, the misplacement of students, a great concern of mine, needs much more attention. This is consistent with Dr. Bedell's concern "that the majority of students tracked into vocational and non-academic courses and grouped in lower achieving sections are minorities --primarily African American and Hispanic students". It is my belief that the misplacement of the Hispanic youth is exaggerated because of limited or absence of English communication skills. Bilingual education has attempted to address this problem but has not resulted in significant outcomes. Granted, there has been some improvement but the numbers of Hispanics graduating from high school or college have not increased significantly. According to a report in the April 2, 1992 issue of the Higher Education and National Affairs, "minority representation among master's recipients changed little from 1979 to 1989, growing from 10 percent to 11 percent." Dr. Bedell stops short of saying STOP THE WORLD, LETS START OVER, THIS TIME WALKING IN CONCERT WITH THE MUSIC. There is a need to provide what Dr. Bedell has described -- effective preschool programs, focusing on the low socioeconomic population; collaborative work cultures/cooperative learning and Individual Service Planning. I agree that these approaches would contribute greatly in bringing the educational system up to date and prepare it for the year 2000.

In conclusion, let me add my observations as to what our educational system must consider in order to provide a more effective learning environment for minorities with and without disabilities.

The educational system(s) must:

* Have a better understanding of the ethnic/cultural differences of the population they are and will be serving.
* Have knowledge of the demographics of the future

* Provide for family involvement
* Promote and support discipline at home and school
* Promote and support cultural sensitivity training for
  - School Boards
  - School Administration
  - Teachers/Faculty
* Provide for system flexibility
* Use of team approach to teaching and learning

It was at a conference on Wellness in the Worksite, a presenter described the term TEAM as the acronym for

T-OGETHER
E-VERYONE
A-CCOMPLISHES
M-ORE

Thank you, mil gracias